

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/099,697

Examiner

Andrew Joseph Rudy

Applicant(s)

VISWANATH ET AL.

Art Unit

3627

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to the 09 October 2007 Amendment after Final.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-28 and 30-32.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
- (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
- 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☐ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☐ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Applicant's request for reconsideration of the finality of the rejection of the last Office action is persuasive and, therefore, the finality of that action is withdrawn. Further, the previously withdrawn claims 1-14 and 28-32 are rejoined.

Allowable Subject Matter

2. Claims 1-28 and 30-32 are allowed.

3. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in an October 31, 2007 telephone interview followed by a November 1, 2007 electronic e-mail with/from Mr. Robert Kowert (Reg. No. 39,255).

The application has been amended as follows:

Claim 29 has been cancelled.

Claims 1-3, 8-10, 15, 28 and 30 are amended as indicated below.

1. (Currently amended) An electronic purchasing system, comprising:
 - a process manager system configured to automatically process electronic purchase requisitions over multiple back-end resource servers, wherein the process manager system is configured to access a plurality of catalogs

containing descriptions of goods and services pertinent to a procurement environment;

a database configured to store data descriptors describing items contained in said catalogs, and configured to store data object and attributes pertinent to said electronic purchase requisitions; and

a line item approving system configured to, responsive to receiving a particular purchase requisition associated with a particular purchasing requisition request, process approval of a plurality of items specified in said particular purchasing purchase requisition on a line-by-line basis, wherein one or more approvers are identified for each of the plurality of items, wherein to process approval the line item approving system is further configured to present to a particular approver only those items for which the particular approver is identified, and wherein the items for which the particular approver is identified are less than all of the plurality of items specified in said particular purchase requisition.

2. (Currently amended) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 1, wherein the process manager system is configured to generate an approval graph of identified approvers of the plurality of line items specified in said particular purchasing purchase requisition, and wherein for each identified approver said approval graph indicates the items for which the approver is identified.

3. (Currently amended) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 2, further comprising an automatic notification service configured to automatically detect a line item approval in said particular purchase requisition and notify approvers in said approval ~~matrix~~ graph only if they are identified approvers of an item approved by said line item approval.

4. (Original) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 3, wherein said automatic notification service is an electronic mail service.

5. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 1, wherein said line item approving system comprises an approval matrix configured to associate an identified approver with each line item and conditions related to approval authority in said particular purchase requisition.

6. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 1, wherein said line item approving system comprises a workflow module configured to coordinate said approval process between approvers identified for said particular purchase requisition.

7. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 6, wherein said line item approving system further comprises a workflow case module configured to store a plurality of workflow tasks defining a unit of work for each identified approver in said particular purchase requisition.

8. (Currently amended) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 7, wherein said workflow tasks further define operations that each of said identified approvers perform in relation to said particular ~~purchasing~~ purchase requisition.

9. (Currently amended) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 8, wherein said operations comprise approving a particular line item in said particular ~~purchasing~~ purchase requisition.

10. (Currently amended) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 9, wherein said operations further comprise declining said particular line item in said particular ~~purchasing~~ purchase requisition.

11. (Original) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 10, wherein said operations further comprise reassigning approval of said particular line item in said particular purchase requisition.

12. (Original) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 11, wherein said operations further comprises delegating approval of said particular line item in said particular purchase requisition.

13. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 2, wherein said process manager system comprises a workflow control module configured to monitor and track approvals by identified approvers specified in a purchase requisition.

14. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 13, wherein said process manager system further comprises an approval graph generator configured to generate a matrix of identified approvers for purchase requisitions submitted to the electronic purchase system.

15. (Currently amended) An electronic purchasing approval system, comprising:

a line item approval module configured to, in response to receiving a particular ~~purchase~~ purchasing requisition associated with a particular purchasing request, process approval of a plurality of items specified in said particular purchasing requisition on a line-by-line basis, wherein one or more approvers are identified for each of the plurality of items, wherein to process approval the line item approval module is further configured to present to a particular approver only those items for which the particular approver is identified, wherein the items for which the particular approver is identified are less than all of the plurality of items specified in said particular purchasing requisition; and

a process manager configured to manage the approval process in said line item approval module.

16. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 15, wherein said process manager comprises a graph generator configured to generate an approval graph of identified approvers of the plurality of items specified in said particular purchasing requisition, and wherein for each identified approver said approval graph indicates the items for which the approver is identified.

17. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 16, wherein said process manager further comprises an automatic notification service configured to automatically detect a line item approval in said particular purchasing requisition and notify approvers in said approval graph only if they are identified approvers of an item approved by said line item approval.

18. (Original) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 17, wherein said notification service is an electronic mail service.

19. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 15, wherein said line item approval module comprises an approval matrix configured to associate an identified approver with each line item and conditions related to said approver's approval authority in said particular purchasing requisition.

20. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 15, wherein said line item approval module comprises a workflow module configured to coordinate said approval process between approvers identified for said particular purchasing requisition.

21. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 15, wherein said line item approval module further comprises a workflow case module configured to store a plurality of workflow tasks defining a unit of work for each identified approver in said particular purchasing requisition, and wherein said workflow tasks further define operations that each of said identified approvers may perform in relation to said particular purchasing requisition.

22. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 21, wherein said operations that each of said identified approvers may perform in relation to said particular purchasing requisition comprise:

approving said particular line item in said particular purchasing requisition; and

declining said particular line item in said particular purchasing requisition.

23. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 22, wherein in response to an identified approver declining said particular line item in said particular purchasing requisition, the line item approval module is configured to generate a dummy file comprising one or more declined line items.

24. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 22, wherein said operations further comprise reassigning approval of said particular line item in said particular purchasing requisition.

25. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 22, wherein said operations further comprise delegating approval of said particular line item in said particular purchasing requisition.

26. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing approval system of Claim 15, wherein said process manager comprises a workflow control module configured to monitor and track approvals by identified approvers specified in a purchasing requisition.

27. (Previously presented) The electronic purchasing system of Claim 16, wherein for each identified approver, said approval graph includes an indication of the approver's actions regarding approval of each item for which the approver is identified.

28. (Currently amended) A line item approval method in an electronic purchasing system, comprising:

receiving a purchase request cataloged in a plurality of documents by said electronic purchasing system, said purchasing request comprising goods, services and supplied information defining purchasing parameters specific and unique to a particular purchasing professional;
generating an approval matrix defining a list of a plurality of approvers responsible for approving line items in said purchase request, wherein each line item ~~may be~~ is associated with a respective approver;

distributing said purchase request to said plurality of approvers to approve said line items in said purchase request associated with each of said identified approvers on a line-by-line basis, said distributing comprises presenting to a particular approver only those line items for which the particular approver is identified, and wherein the items for which the particular approver is identified are less than all of the plurality of items specified in said particular purchasing request, wherein each approver approves only their associated line items; and

generating a purchase order in response to said purchase request, said purchase order being generated based on line items approved by said plurality of approvers.

30. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 28 ~~[[29]]~~, wherein said purchase order is generated irrespective of a non-approval of a line item in said purchase request by one of said plurality of identified approvers.

31. (Original) The method of Claim 30, wherein said line item by line item approval comprises providing a requisition in-box for notifying each of said approvers when a line item in said purchase request requires their approval.

32. (Original) The method of Claim 28, wherein said approval matrix provides a list of approval conditions associated with each one of said plurality of approvers.

4. A further pertinent reference of interest is noted on the attached PTO-892.

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andrew Joseph Rudy whose telephone number is 571-272-6789. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ryan M. Zeender can be reached on 571-272-6790. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for

published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrew Joseph Rudy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Andrew" being the most prominent.

Andrew Joseph Rudy
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3627